and Cooperatives. The Credit flow to Agriculture from all lending institutions is projected at about Rs. 1,05,000 crores.

The above policy envisages coverage of at least 100 new farmers at each rural and semi-urban branch, targeting a total number of 50 lakh farmers throughout the country; loans for two to three investment projects in the new areas of plantation and horticulture, fisheries, organic farming, agro-processing, livestock, micro irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, watershed management, village ponds development and other allied activities, apart from financing 10 agro-clinics in every district.

Committee for proper water management

†*406. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a new Committee for suggesting proper management of water in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by when the said Committee is likely to submit its report;

(c) whether Government had received suggestions with regard to proper management of water during the past years also; and

(d) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): (a) to (d) The Government has not constituted any new Committee for suggesting proper management of water in the country. However, Ministry of Water Resources has constituted a Task Force for Flood Management/Erosion Control to suggest short term and long term measure for management of flood control in Assam and other neighbouring states as well as Bihar, West Bengal and Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The Planning Commission has also constituted (i) Task Group on Integration of ongoing schemes to address Water Conservation as a Water Mission and (ii) Task Group on Efficient utilisation of Water Resources.

The suggestions on various issues relating to development and management of water resources are expressed by experts from time to

†The Original notice of question was received in Hindi.

time at various fora such as in conferences, seminars, discussions during meetings, etc. These suggestions are duly considered and appropriate actions are taken.

Farmer-friendly Credit Policy

*407. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to bring in a farmer-friendly credit policy during the current fiscal;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed scheme;

(c) whether Government would grant interest-free loans to certain categories of poor farmers;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what is the action plan of Government to control suicides by debt-ridden farmers in the country?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) An announcement has already been made by the Government on 18.6.2004 for increasing the ground level credit flow to agriculture and allied activities by 30% during 2004-05 and doubling the flow in three years. This Farmer-Friendly Agriculture Credit Package also envisages debt restructuring/rescheduling and fresh loans to farmers affected by natural calamities, One Time Settlement (OTS) for small and marginal farmers, fresh finance for farmers whose earlier debts have been settled through compromise or write off and relief measures for farmers indebted to non-institutional lenders.

Pursuant to the above announcement, Reserve Bank of India has already advised all scheduled commercial banks on 24.6.2004 to take action to implement the programme. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has also issued similar guidelines to Regional Rural Banks and cooperatives.

(c) and (d) The announcement does not envisage providing interest free loans to farmers.

(e) In order to provide relief to farmers facing actue distress due to their heavy indebtedness to non-institutional lenders i.e. money lenders, banks have been advised to give loans to such farmers against appropriate collateral or groups security.